Faculty Senate Working Group Report on Surveys for Review of Deans

Approved by the Faculty Senate on September 7, 2016

Working Group:
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In October 2014, the Faculty Senate approved revisions to the "Review of Deans" Policy. The full document can be viewed here: http://professor.rice.edu/uploadedFiles/Professor/Faculty_Senate/Approved%20Review%20of%20Deans,%20Oct%201,%202014.pdf See also: http://professor.rice.edu/Template_FacultySenate.aspx?id=2147484426

One of the recommendations of the revised policy was the following, which has not been addressed until now:
"A working group should be formed to arrive at a common core group of questions which will be appropriate to include in all dean reviews regardless of school. The committee should add to the core questions further questions relevant to the specific school. Survey questions should include a Not Applicable or No Opinion answer option."

Furthermore, previous Dean Review committees have expressed a desire for a common set of survey questions. Up until now, each committee has had to design its own set from a complicated array of precedents.

Working Group Charge: "The working group is asked to develop a common core group of questions which will be appropriate to include in all dean reviews, regardless of school."

Process:
- Our Working Group collected the latest Dean Review surveys from all the schools, and chose the best questions and layouts from each.
- For best results (to avoid too many "not applicable" answers and to avoid respondent fatigue), we created 3 separate surveys so that questions were directly applicable to the particular stakeholders taking the survey: administrators (associate or assistant deans, department chairs, former chairs, and center directors in the particular School), faculty (voting faculty in the School), and staff (in the School).
- To preserve survey anonymity and to reduce labor for future Dean Review committees, we included more cautionary instructions to respondents regarding open-ended questions, in both the Introductory Letter to the survey, as well as right before the open-ended questions in the
survey. If verbatim remarks still compromise the anonymity of survey respondents, future committees may follow past practice and amend those narratives before filing the report to the Provost, who will provide a copy to the Dean.

**Survey Links:**

Survey of Administrators  
https://riceuniversity.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe1/preview/SV_bCUA4Xxcm5RnF5z

Survey of Faculty  
https://riceuniversity.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe1/preview/SV_38IcGGKtRTyQQU1

Survey of Staff  
https://riceuniversity.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe1/preview/SV_qttHrnu5FWWxvB

**Recommended Best Practices for Implementation:**

Recent committees who have performed Dean Reviews have recommended some best practices that our Working Group supports:
- that the surveys be posted on the internet permanently so that the review process is more transparent.
- that the Dean's self-report follow the same format as the surveys with thematic categories in the same order:
  - Leadership
  - Academics
  - Faculty Development
  - Staff Development
  - Administrative Effectiveness
  - Accessibility and Communication
  - Fairness, Ethics, and Diversity
  - External Relationships and Development
- that the Dean's self-report be made readily available to faculty and stakeholders in advance of the survey and that a link to the self-report be provided at the time of the survey along with the Introductory Letter (sample below).
- that the common set of survey questions be supplemented with questions pertinent to the particular School or Dean.
- that Dean Review Committees be provided with greater support staff for carrying out their tasks.

Special thanks go to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) and in particular to Angela Powell Thompson for providing IT support to create the new surveys. OIE will continue to administer surveys for all Dean Reviews.
Sample Introductory Letter

Dear ${e://Field/PREF_NAME},

In collaboration with the Faculty Senate and per University policy, the Provost has appointed a committee to conduct a review of Dean X, who is in the X year of a X-year term as Dean of the X School. The charge of the review committee listed below is to compile information and advice from faculty and other pertinent constituents with regard to the Dean’s performance and to summarize its findings in a confidential report to the Provost and to Dean X.

The Dean has provided a self-evaluation for you to review, which may be found at [https://owlspace-ccm.rice.edu/XXX]

To provide a comprehensive assessment of the Dean's performance and accomplishments, the Committee requests the faculty in the School of X, including those with either primary or joint appointments in the School, to participate in this brief online survey. Although all efforts will be made to maintain anonymity of respondents, please note that the written comments will be included verbatim in the committee’s final written report. The quantitative survey data will be compiled separately from the written comments in a manner to preserve responder anonymity. In addition to the survey, the Committee will be collecting further information from the various administrative offices of the university as well as through individual and group interviews. The quantitative data and written comments from the survey, in addition to our summaries from the interviews will be included in a confidential written report to the Provost and the Dean.

Thank you for your participation in this process.

Please take the survey by clicking on the link below:

${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

If the link to the survey does not work, copy and paste the following URL into your web browser:

${l://SurveyURL}

Thank you very much for your participation in this process.

[list of committee members]